

**Friendship Heights
Transportation Management District
Advisory Committee
January 14, 2014**

Voting Members

James Calderwood
Barbara Condos
Tiffany Gee (Chair)
Campbell Graeb
Cobey R. Kuff
John Mertens
Rachael Schacherer

Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers
Town of Somerset
Chevy Chase Land Company
Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights
WP Project Developer, LLC
Friendship Heights Village
Friendship Heights Village

Non-voting Members

Sandra L. Brecher
-Representing DOT Director
Matthew Folden

MCDOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services

M-NCPPC

TMD Staff

Jim Carlson
Nakengi Byrd

MCDOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
MCDOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services

Absent

Aurelio Baca-Asher
Joe Dixon
Capt. David Falcinelli
Chief John Fitzgerald
Kenneth Hartman
Allison Lazare (Vice Chair)
Sheila Wilson

The JBG Companies
GEICO
Montgomery County Police
Chevy Chase Village Police
B-CC Services Center
United Educators Insurance
MCDOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services

Guests

Michelle Golden
Bob Joiner

MCDOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
The Agenda News

Abbreviations:

DDOT = District Dept. of Transportation
MSHA = Maryland State Highway Administration

1, 2 & 3 Introduction/Minutes/Chair's Comments: Tiffany Gee called meeting to order. Members and guest introduced themselves. Sandra Brecher introduced new Commuter Services Sr. Marketing Manager, Michelle Golden, who is replacing Sam Oji. The minutes were tabled.

Item 4 – Discussion: TMD Pedestrian Safety & Traffic Projects: Mr. Carlson discussed a work plan list of traffic and safety issues for the TMD (included in meeting packet). The TMD work plan lists a number of objectives for improving transit, pedestrian safety, and general mobility within Friendship Heights; additional issues from Campbell Graeb have been added to the list.

Mr. Carlson said a number of the items will need to be resolved by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) or the Maryland State Highway Administration (MSHA) – either separately by those agencies or in coordination with Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT). In general, anything pertaining to Western Avenue must be addressed by DDOT. Other major arterials, such as Wisconsin Avenue (MD 355) and River Road (MD 190) will be addressed by MSHA, with the exception of managing the traffic signals which is the County’s responsibility.

Mr. Carlson discussed frequent cab queuing in front of Lia’s Restaurant on Willard in the no parking zone in order to enter the official cab stand in front of Whole Foods. At present, there are only two taxi enforcement personnel for the entire County. However, **Mr. Carlson** is working with the MC Taxicab Regulation unit to get more frequent visits to the area. Also, taxicab companies communicate periodically with their drivers by newsletter; they are being asked to remind drivers not to stand on Willard. **Mr. Carlson** added that the cab drivers are not employees of the cab companies, but are independent contractors.

Mr. Graeb believes it is a policing issue and asked about the taxi call button on Wisconsin Circle that had been used in the past. **Tiffany Gee** said that the call button did not work because it required drivers to wait out of sight in the Giant parking lot; also, because of the sight issue, people using the button on the Circle had no way of knowing if there was a driver available to respond. The call button was abandoned in favor of reestablishing the cab stand on Wisconsin Circle, with cabs allowed to queue in front of the TRiPS Commuter Store.

Ms. Gee said Montgomery County police do not regulate the taxicabs. Currently, Chevy Chase Land Company security personnel monitor the cabs. She also reported that the old cab waiting area in back of Giant will be changed in accordance with the new site plan.

Cobey Kuff said Wisconsin Place allows three cabs to queue in front of Whole Foods as long as they do not block the handicap ramps. Fumes from idling cabs are also an issue.

It was suggested that The JBG Companies, developer of the property containing Lia’s, use its security personnel to monitor cabs in front the restaurant. **Mr. Carlson** confirmed with Lia’s manager that the cab queues do create a problem for the business.

James Ryan, MC Taxicab Regulation, will be a guest at a future TMD meeting.

Other TMD work plan action items discussed:

- Replacing the jagged aluminum flashing on the storm drains on Western, adjacent to Wisconsin Place. **Mr. Carlson** had previously advised DDOT of this issue – he will follow up.
- Removing the obsolete “No Left Turn” sign on Western Avenue next to Lord & Taylor – the sign regulated traffic into a parking lot that is no longer there. DDOT previously notified – **Mr. Carlson** to follow up.
- Signage improvements needed at the Friendship Heights Metro station rotunda. The lighting and signage improvements currently underway at Bethesda station may be extended throughout Metro system – follow up with Metro for when upgrades are scheduled.
- Light timing adjustment at intersection of Western Ave. and River Rd. to prevent back up on Western - **Mr. Carlson** will follow up with MSHA and DDOT to look at adjusting signal timing.
- Friendship Heights Metro escalator repairs – need to make sure alternative elevators/escalators are functional during repairs to improve mobility issues for elderly.
- The odd construction of what appears to be a handicap ramp in front of Clyde’s at the corner of Wisconsin Ave. and Wisconsin Circle poses a tripping hazard. **Mr. Carlson** will follow up with

MSHA. The elevated sides of the ramp may be for those with sight issues to be able to tap against to ensure they are crossing at the right place.

- Bus shelter lighting safety concerns at the corner of Western Ave. and Courtland – will follow up with Metro.
- Leaves and other debris frequently pile up in front of the Gap stores on Wisconsin Ave. Store managers for the Gap appear to experience a high turnover. **Mr. Carlson** will follow up with the property manager instead of the store manager.
- Lack of parking enforcement on Friendship Blvd., Western Ave., and Wisconsin Ave. in front of the Barlow building. Cars queue in the turning lane due to activity at the medical building.
- Additional discussion regarding the use of metered parking and contractors to enforce parking violations in The Village of Friendship Heights.
- Additional proper parking facilities are needed, preferably covered, for bikes in Friendship Heights, especially at the Metro station. **Mr. Graeub** reported that the bikeshare station on Wisconsin Ave. had 155 bikeshare trips since opening the system; and there were 152 trips at Friendship Heights Metro station.
- There is a lack of enforcement for motorized scooters parking on sidewalks. MCDOT is looking into the issue.

Item 5 – FY15 Budget Priorities Request: Due to time constraints members can give comments or make changes to the budget items via email for the FY15 meeting with the County Executive next month.

Item 6 – Updates: **Ms. Brecher** reported that Metro awarded a new contract to develop a new electronic payment program to allow credit cards and smart phones to be used for fare payment. The program will be piloted by the end of the year.

The minutes vote was tabled until the next meeting on February 11th 2014.

Meeting adjourned.